



# U.S. Embassy Santiago Newsletter



## Information for American Citizens in Chile

Volume 4 Issue 3

July-September 2008

WINTER EDITION

### Embassy Hosts Flag Raising Ceremony on July 4



*A young American*

On Friday July 4, the Embassy celebrated the 232nd anniversary of America's independence. This year, nearly 400 Americans and their families attended the traditional flag raising ceremony on the Embassy promenade, an event that continues to grow each year, and inspires patriotism among all guests.

This year the program began with a rousing rendition of well-known American tunes played by the 30-member Chilean Military Academy Band. Deputy Chief of Mission Carol Urban was the MC for the event, which featured a solemn flag raising ceremony. As the Embassy's Marine Security Guard detachment marched to the flag pole and raised a

crisp new American flag high into the sky, even the construction workers at the high-rise building across the street paused their work to observe the ceremony.

The silence was broken by the Santiago College Glee Club's rendition of the American national anthem as the crowd joined in singing. It was a proud moment for each American in attendance to know that the flag waves proudly over the Embassy, and that we are citizens of a nation that loves freedom and cherishes liberty.

Ambassador Paul Simons shared some remarks about the history of U.S.—Chilean relations that focused on the 4th of July, and delivered Independence Day greetings from the White House.



*Guests and the Marines*



*The Marine Security Guards*

The event was capped off with a patriotic sing-a-long led by the American Association of Chile and refreshments generously provided by Starbucks and California Creations.

To receive notification of next year's event, American citizens can register with the Embassy online at [chile.usembassy.gov](http://chile.usembassy.gov).

## **Overseas Voting Update**

Do you want to vote in the 2008 presidential election? This is an election year, and we continue this primer on how to vote overseas. Your best source for step-by-step instructions on how to register is the Federal Voting Assistance Program website, [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). The basic steps are below, but each state has slightly different rules, so please visit the website to ensure that you properly complete the registration form. If you register and request a ballot in a timely manner but do not receive a ballot in time to vote, you may complete a federal write-in absentee ballot to vote in Federal Elections only. The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot is also available on [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

### **THE BASIC ABSENTEE VOTING PROCESS**

**Step 1:** Citizen completes and mails the Federal Post Card Application Form (SF-76), Registration and Absentee Ballot Request Form, available online at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

**Step 2:** Local Election Official approves Registration request or requests further information

**Step 3:** Local Election Official mails absentee ballot

**Step 4:** Citizen votes and mails the absentee ballot to the Local Election Official in time to meet state deadlines.

In order to receive an absentee ballot in a timely manner, it is necessary for citizens to keep their local election official informed of address changes. Please contact us at [VoteSantiago@state.gov](mailto:VoteSantiago@state.gov) with any additional questions on how to register, request a ballot, or vote.



*Voter Registration booth at the 4th of July.*



The State Department is pleased to announce the launch of a new website [www.studentsabroad.state.gov](http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov), geared specifically to students traveling abroad. This site is a one-stop source for information about getting passports and travel documents, staying healthy overseas, signing up as an absentee voter, and registering with the U.S. Embassy in case you need help while traveling overseas. Why not take a look at the website right now, and share the link with the students in your family?



## Family Mediation: Alternate Solutions

Mediation is a method of conflict resolution in which a neutral third party imparts legal or value judgments, provided that the participants in the mediation process are seeking a mutually agreeable solution, and that they desire to equitably meet the needs and interests between both sides.



Mediation is an effective alternative to court proceedings because it is a quick and inexpensive method that can be used to resolve various kinds of conflicts. This method of conflict resolution is voluntary, and allows the mediator to provide assistance in improving communication that will lead to creative solutions as long as both parties are willing participants. The process involves the active participation of the various parties, which increases the responsibility they take for their decisions, and helps them achieve agreements that will have greater long-term effects.

### Advantages of mediation

The process is not adversarial, and promotes a win-win solution with less financial costs. It protects family relationships, especially those involving minors, since mediation reduces the emotional costs by preserving or restoring relationships damaged by the conflict. Participants learn to resolve conflicts by working in a cooperative, non-confrontational, and self-paced environment.

### What Matters can be Mediated?

- Mutual relationships between spouses
- Pensions

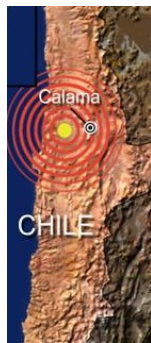
- Workers Claims and benefits for spouses
- Personal care of children
- Child visitation rights
- Marriage rights
- Child raising techniques

### More information on mediation

If you are interested in further information on this subject, you may visit the Chilean Ministry of Justice online at [www.mediacionchile.cl](http://www.mediacionchile.cl). You can also visit the Mediation Unit of the Ministry of Justice at the following address:

Morande 107, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor. Comuna de Santiago Centro, Santiago, Chile. Phone: 6743-5812  
—By Roxana Pacheco, Staff Attorney

## Emergency Preparedness



Would you or your loved ones know what to do in an emergency? Chile is one of the most seismically active countries in the world. Its location on the so-called Pacific "Rim of Fire" means that Chile experiences many earthquakes and volcano eruptions each year. In addition to earthquakes and volcanoes, Chile is also susceptible to tsunamis and landslides.

With these imminent threats in mind, the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy has prepared a [website](#) to provide the American community in Chile with useful, accurate information about preparing to confront earthquakes and other disasters. On the [website](#) you will find a series of links that provide background on natural disaster threats in Chile and information to help you and your family prepare to deal with these threats. You can improve your emergency preparedness right now by registering with the Embassy's website, [chile.usembassy.gov](http://chile.usembassy.gov) (click on U.S. Citizens, then Emergency Services).



## **American Citizen Service Unit – Hours and Contact Information**

Walk-In Hours: M-F 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. (except the first Friday of every month)  
Appointments: Wed. 2:00 p.m.

Address: Av. Andrés Bello 2800, Las Condes, Santiago  
Phone: (56) (2) 330-3000  
E-mail: [SantiagoAmcit@state.gov](mailto:SantiagoAmcit@state.gov)

Visit our website, [chile.usembassy.gov](http://chile.usembassy.gov), for detailed information and instructions for obtaining services and forms. The State Department website, [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov), has even more information about travel to other countries and numerous other items of interest to Americans living or traveling abroad.

---

## **Upcoming Embassy Holidays**

The Embassy is closed on U.S. and Chilean holidays. During in-service training days, we are available for emergencies only. The in-service days provide our staff with important training on rules and regulations, so that they can provide quality service to you, our customers. Thank you for your understanding!

August 1 – In-Service Training (Emergencies Only)  
August 15 – Assumption Day (Chilean Holiday)

September 1 – Labor Day (U.S. Holiday)  
September 5 – In-Service Training (Emergencies Only)  
September 18 – Independence Day (Chilean Holiday)  
September 19 – Army Day (Chilean Holiday)

October 3 – In-Service Training (Emergencies Only)



*Tololo Observatory in Winter*



*Winter in Pucón*

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

**The American Association of Chile:** a non-profit, non-political organization serving and uniting the citizens of the United States and their families, and striving to build strong bridges between members and the Chilean community (description from AAC's website, [www.aachile.org](http://www.aachile.org)).

**The American Chamber of Commerce Chile (AMCHAM Chile):** Promotes free trade and investment between Chile and the United States and serves as an effective voice for the membership while facilitating related services (description from AMCHAM's website, [www.amchamchile.cl](http://www.amchamchile.cl)).

**The Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO):** Describes itself as a non-partisan, public-service organization dedicated to serving the interests of Americans abroad and has asked us to provide its contact details to the American community in Chile. The AARO's email address is [aaro@aaro.org](mailto:aaro@aaro.org) and its website is [www.aaro.org](http://www.aaro.org).

**Little League Chile:** Do you know a child who would like to play baseball? Would you like to get involved with youth baseball? Contact Mr. Jorge Varela at 09-437 2050 or email: [jlwarela@vtr.net](mailto:jlwarela@vtr.net).

**International Professional Women's Association (IPWA):** a not-for-profit organization of English-speaking women interested in professional, personal and cultural development. Activities include monthly meetings, dinner and cocktail parties. More information is available at: [www.ipwasantiago.org](http://www.ipwasantiago.org)

**English Language Religious Services in Santiago:** Details are available on the Embassy website [chile.usembassy.gov](http://chile.usembassy.gov) under the Frequently Asked Questions tab under American Citizens. (Schedules are subject to change. Please call to confirm.)



*Winter in Santiago*